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Item 68 of the provisional agenda*

Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification

Letter dated 1 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Paragraph 5 of your report (A/54/166), entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", submitted to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly under item 68 of the preliminary list, states "With respect to the United Nations Special Commission, as of 16 December 1998, activities to verify Iraq's compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions ceased." Your report gives no reason for the cessation of the Special Commission's activities, nor does it mention the way in which those activities were carried out. With a view to clarifying the facts of this important matter, we should like to point out that the international agreements relating to disarmament, the guidelines and principles for the involvement of the United Nations, and your report (A/50/377), entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", all affirm that verification can be defined as a process in which data are collected, collated and analysed in order to make an informed judgement as to whether a party is complying with its obligations. The guidelines also lay emphasis on a number of principles, including the principle that effective verification can be undertaken without necessarily compromising national secrets, that it is important to protect sensitive national installations and information, that care should be taken to prevent the abuse of verification, and that the economic, technological and social development of States should not be jeopardized. These principles guarantee the independence, impartiality, objectivity and professionalism of the verification process and put it in the correct legal framework, thereby upholding the rights of States and the credibility and impartiality of the United Nations.

If we examine, in the light of the above principles, the activities of the Special Commission and its various teams of inspectors and, in particular, those bearing American and British nationality, the following facts become clear:

* A/54/150.

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1. The concept of verification applied by the Special Commission, particularly since the end of 1993, is a concept quite distinct from that of inspection. Iraq fully cooperated in the process for as long as it was clear that the concept of verification was linked or limited to what was necessary for, and material to, the implementation of paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), leaving aside matters of secondary importance to be included in the permanent system of inspections. A framework for this system was set out in the Joint Programme of Action agreed between Iraq and the Special Commission on 22 June 1996. In paragraph 4 of that Programme, both sides concurred that work should concentrate on and be limited to fundamental areas related to the purposes of verification. Subsequently, however, the Special Commission arbitrarily exaggerated verification procedures with a view to finding some kind of organic relationship between verification and its claims relating to concealment. Such exaggeration, employed by the Special Commission in the final years of its work, not only exceeded the provisions of the Commission's mandate, but diverted it from the path it had previously pursued and made verification a cloak behind which the separate policies of one or two States well known for their antagonism towards Iraq could be concealed. This constituted a grave deviation from the specific mandate granted to the Special Commission pursuant to Security Council resolutions.

Not only did the Special Commission expand and extend the concept of verification in a manner that exceeded the provisions of its mandate, but it also deviated significantly from its previous course. Verification became a cloak behind which the sanctions imposed on Iraq could be prolonged and the political goals of the States known for their hostile policy towards Iraq could be achieved. This constituted a serious departure from the mandate given to the Special Commission pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions.

2. The American inspector Scott Ritter has admitted that:

(a) He visited Israel more than 30 times and exchanged information relating to the security of Iraq with the Israeli intelligence agencies;

(b) Other Special Commission inspectors had numerous meetings with those Israeli agencies and coordinated with them the information gathered during their work in Iraq;

(c) High-ranking officials in the United States administration directed the activities of the Special Commission in Iraq and obtained information from those activities that jeopardized the security of Iraq and its leadership and served the political goals of the United States of America, which were inimical to Iraq;

(d) Central Intelligence Agency operatives were included in the inspection teams wearing the blue helmet of the United Nations, and their aim was to conspire against Iraq and its leadership.

3. Under the supervision of American intelligence agencies, the Special Commission installed surveillance and interception equipment in order to monitor the movements of and contacts made by Iraqi officials.

4. Several inspectors working with the Special Commission were interviewed by foreign — in particular, American and British — television networks, and publicized secret information that jeopardized the security and national sovereignty of Iraq. Some Special Commission inspectors also published books and articles, largely of a political nature, intended to serve political goals antagonistic to Iraq and completely at odds with the nature of their work and their positions as international officials.

5. Richard Butler, former Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, on the orders of senior officials in the United States Administration, and without authorization from the Security Council or the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on two occasions withdrew

personnel from the Baghdad Monitoring and Verification Centre, the first being in November 1998 and the second in December 1998.

6. On 15 December 1998, Richard Butler, former Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, submitted to the Security Council a report that he had prepared in consultation with high-ranking officials in the United States Administration with a view to providing grounds for the launching of a military attack on Iraq by the United States and the United Kingdom on the night of 16 December 1998.

It is the United States of America which, having diverted the Special Commission from the duties mandated to it pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions, has killed, buried and destroyed the verification process, and set a shameful example with its violations of and contempt for the Charter of the United Nations and for the role played by the Security Council in international disarmament agreements and conventions.

7. In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation on 27 June 1999, the Secretary-General stated that there was some justification for allegations that United Nations weapons inspectors in Iraq were involved in spying for Washington. This statement confirms what was already public knowledge. Iraq had drawn attention to the situation, and warned of its dangerous consequences at the international level. The fact that the Special Commission had become a tool of the United States Administration, to be used at its whim in order to serve its interests, had done the United Nations considerable harm and would undermine future disarmament regimes. This was also confirmed by the Secretary-General in the aforementioned interview.

The facts set forth above confirm that the practices of the now defunct Special Commission have seriously damaged the credibility of the United Nations and its role in the field of verification. Considerable harm has also been done to Iraq by the United States' and the United Kingdom's exploitation of the Special Commission as a tool for espionage and aggression and in order to prolong the total embargo against Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly under item 68 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Saeed H. **Hasan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda items 20 (f) and 50 of the provisional agenda*
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN
THE SITUATION OF AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 4 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government I have the honour to transmit to you the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the recent development of the situation in Afghanistan, issued in Tashkent on 3 August 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, under provisional agenda items 20 (f) and 50, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alisher VOHIDOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/54/150.

Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued on 3 August 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan

The latest flaring up of military confrontation in Afghanistan has caused deep concern in Uzbekistan.

The escalation of hostilities has brought new sufferings to the population of the country and has resulted in a suspension of deliveries of international humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

The growing involvement of mercenaries from other countries in the Afghan conflict is taking on a dangerous character.

The resumption of large-scale military hostilities in Afghanistan seriously undermines the efforts of the international community to find a settlement to the Afghan problem and contradicts the main principles of the Tashkent Declaration recently adopted by the "neighbours and friends of Afghanistan" within the framework of the "6+2" Group.

Proceeding from the understanding that there can be no military solution to the Afghan problem and from the need to settle it solely by political means, the Government of Uzbekistan calls upon the inter-Afghan parties to cease hostilities, conclude a ceasefire agreement and resume peace negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Government of Uzbekistan also appeals to the States members of the "6+2" Group which signed the Tashkent Declaration to observe their commitments not to render military assistance to any Afghan party, prevent their territories from being used for such purposes and utilize all available opportunities to prompt the parties to the conflict to observe a ceasefire and resume negotiations.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Item 50 of the provisional agenda*
THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 4 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention the still unresolved issue of the murder of the staff of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic News Agency's correspondent in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, by the Taliban forces in the wake of their offensive against that northern Afghan city in August 1998. While we are approaching the first anniversary of this tragic event, the Taliban continue to stubbornly disregard the rules of international law and have yet to heed the demand of the international community to apprehend and help to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice.

It may be recalled that this horrific tragedy raised extreme international concern and outrage, particularly in the United Nations, over the Taliban's inhumane and unlawful behaviour. The Security Council, in its resolution 1193 (1998) condemned, in the most unambiguous terms, the atrocities committed by the Taliban, throughout Afghanistan, including the capture of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e-Sharif. Following the admission by the Taliban leadership of the massacre of the Iranian diplomats and journalist, the Security Council, in its resolution 1214 (1998), condemned, inter alia, the capture of the Iranian Consulate-General and the murder of the Iranian diplomats and a journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif and stressed that those acts constituted flagrant violations of international law and, furthermore, called upon "the Taliban to cooperate with the United Nations in investigating these crimes with a view to prosecuting those responsible".

* A/54/150.

In resolution 53/203 A of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly strongly condemned the killing of the Iranian diplomatic and consular staff and the journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif, and urged the Taliban "to inform the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations about the result of its investigations to date", and called upon the Taliban "to cooperate fully with an international investigation of the murder of the Iranian diplomats and the Islamic Republic News Agency correspondent with a view to prosecuting the guilty parties". The same demand had also been made in the statement of the ministerial meeting of the "six plus two" group at United Nations Headquarters on 21 September 1998.

In this connection, I should also like to note the reference in the report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/1109) to the meeting of 14 October 1998 between the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and the Taliban's leader, at which the latter "confirmed his commitment to the continued investigation by the Taliban of the killing of the Iranian diplomats and the Iranian journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif and promised that the Taliban authorities would support and cooperate with an international mission of inquiry into all circumstances surrounding the fate of the above-mentioned slain Iranians". The report, furthermore, expressed the sincere hope of the Secretary-General that his "Special Envoy's achievements will continue to be built upon, inter alia, by prosecuting those responsible for the murders ...".

Despite such undertakings and promises of cooperation by the Taliban leadership to help bring those responsible for the murders to justice, I must inform you that the Taliban response has thus far been totally unacceptable to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Their response has been marked by procrastination and stonewalling, indicating a lack of political will to pursue the matter seriously.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to pursue vigorously the case of its slain diplomats and journalist through all possible means, including the office of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Afghanistan, until it is settled satisfactorily. We earnestly hope that the Security Council will take resolute and effective measures to implement its previous decisions in this regard and thereby persuade the Taliban to fulfil their obligations in helping to bring the murderers of the Iranian diplomats and journalist to justice, so that this sensitive and outstanding issue can be resolved without further delay.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 50 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hadi NEJAD-HOSSEINIAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative